

MAINE PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT NETWORK SYSTEM



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****ADVISORY – Important Information****

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TO: All Maine Health Alert Network Recipients

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SUBJECT: **Novel Influenza A (H1N1) in Maine**

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Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC)
(Formerly Bureau of Health)

Maine CDC H1N1 Update

Maine CDC has identified a total of 17 cases of H1N1 (14 confirmed and 3 probable) among Maine residents, along with an additional 4 out of state residents who were ill and tested while staying in Maine, for an overall total of 21. This total includes 7 additional cases this week, 5 in Cumberland County and 2 in York County. One of the two new York County residents is hospitalized. One of the new Cumberland County residents is a Brunswick High School student. Four recent cases are residents of the Brunswick area, indicating possible clustering in that area, and include 3 children or youth.

Out of the 17 cases:

- 2 are health care workers;
- 3 have been hospitalized, and 1 of these remains hospitalized;
- 27 is the average age, with a range of 3 – 60 years;
- 7 are under the age of 18, with 3 being students of K-12 schools.

Of the overall total of 21, 14 had an out of state travel history during the likely period of exposure, including 6 who traveled to other parts of New England or New York State. Of the 4 out of state residents, 1 was tested in York County, 1 in Hancock, 2 in Lincoln County.

The Maine CDC public health laboratory (HETL) has performed over 1,700 influenza PCR tests this past month, and is now able to do confirmatory H1N1 testing, eliminating the need have specimens confirmed at US CDC.

New England Data:

- Massachusetts has about 700 confirmed cases of H1N1, mostly in the Greater Boston area, with 90% of them in people under 40 years of age. 40 of their cases have been hospitalized. (<http://publichealth.blog.state.ma.us/h1n1-swine-flu/>).
- New York has almost 800 confirmed cases, mostly among young people, and has also had school closures. (<http://www.health.state.ny.us/>)
- New Hampshire has 53 confirmed cases, mostly in children and young adults. (http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/DHHS/DHHS_SITE/swineflu.htm).

Because testing is increasingly being limited to those who are hospitalized or at high risk for complications, the number of cases, especially in such states as MA and NY, is becoming less meaningful.

National Data: US CDC reports 10,053 confirmed and probable cases spread among all 50 states and 17 deaths (<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/investigation.htm>).

Canada Data: Canada reports 1,530 confirmed cases, including cases in Quebec (309) Nova Scotia (73), and New Brunswick (2). (<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/swine-porcine/surveillance-eng.php>)

International Data: WHO reports 17,410 cases in 62 countries (<http://www.who.int/csr/don/en/>). WHO is also reporting a continued outbreak of H5N1 (avian influenza) in Egypt, mostly among young people with close contact with dead or sick chickens.

Influenza outbreaks evolve in unpredictable ways, therefore it is impossible to know whether this outbreak will decrease, remain the same, or grow in coming weeks, and whether the illness will remain at its current severity which, on the whole has been relatively mild. Some severe cases may occur in people with underlying risk factors such as young children, the elderly, and people with chronic medical conditions. The U.S. CDC and Maine CDC are watching closely for signs of increased severity of the H1N1 influenza (swine flu) virus, and will continue to monitor and report on any developing trends. Updates are posted at the end of each day on Maine CDC's H1N1 website (<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/swine-flu-2009.shtml>).

Overall Recommendations:

Especially because there is no vaccine for H1N1 influenza, Maine CDC reminds all Mainers to continue taking simple steps to keep themselves and others healthy.

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your cough with a tissue or cough into your inner elbow and not into your hands.
- If you are sick with a fever and a cough or sore throat, stay home from work, and if your child is sick keep them home from school for 7 days, or 24 hours after your symptoms go away—whichever is longer.
- Stay informed about the latest developments on the H1N1 influenza.
- Be prepared (<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/checklists.html>).

Recommendations for Health Care Providers:

1. Federal recommendations are to prioritize testing for novel influenza A (H1N1) to hospitalized patients with an influenza-like illness and persons at risk of severe disease (children < 5 years of age, persons ≥ 65 years of age, pregnant women, and persons with selected chronic conditions).
2. Students with an influenza-like illness (fever with cough or sore throat) should be excluded from school for seven days after illness onset or for 24 hours after becoming asymptomatic, whichever is longer.

A note from a physician does not affect the exclusion policy unless an alternative diagnosis is laboratory confirmed (e.g., strep throat, pertussis). Individuals with a negative PCR test for influenza can return to school when asymptomatic.

3. Antivirals are indicated for treatment of hospitalized patients with an influenza-like illness and persons at risk of severe disease (children < 5 years of age, persons ≥ 65 years of age, pregnant women, and persons with selected chronic conditions). Chemoprophylaxis is indicated for close contacts of a case who are at high risk of severe disease or health care workers who did not wear appropriate personal protective equipment.
4. Health care providers assessing patients with an influenza-like illness should use appropriate infection control precautions. Current recommendations are available at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/>
5. For additional information, please check the Maine CDC's website www.mainepublichealth.gov or call the 24x7 health care provider line at 1-800-821-5821.